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443 "raquítico," as the Tepoztecos would say. Furthermore, the quality of the local
178 fruits and other goods is poor and, unlike other Mexican villages, little care is given
[438] to display. There is also little variety of goods, and it is difficult to predict what
will be available from one market day to another. In short, the market at Tepoztlán
shows symptoms of decline.

In addition to the market days, there are permanent stores in the plaza. As has
been indicated earlier, their number has increased and they have spread to the
outlying barrios. The stores sell most of the daily household necessities and have a
[438] fairly stable clientele. Most sales are in small quantities because of the Tepoztecan
[439] custom of running to the store once or twice a day. But Tepoztecos are going to
Cuernavaca more and more, and are making larger purchases; this has been a
blow to local tradesmen who cannot compete with the Cuernavaca stores and
market.

[438] Itinerant merchants who peddle through the village streets come with a wide
[452] variety of goods, such as blankets, *petates*, palm-bottomed chairs, sweets, and
clothing. In recent years these merchants have introduced selling on the install-
ment plan, and make collections on their rounds.

[437] Goods are also circulated by barter between families, although this is declining.
[465] Corn may be exchanged for eggs or other food. Corn is still used as payment for
wages or for the services of *curanderos*, especially when small sums are involved.

439 Most Tepoztecan produce is sold outside the village, primarily in Cuernavaca.
[433] It is estimated that Tepoztecos sell approximately 1,000 *cargas* of corn per year.
Many poor people complain that they have to go to Cuernavaca to purchase corn
because none is available locally. Other Tepoztecan cash crops, charcoal and *ciruelas*,
are also sold outside the village; charcoal goes to Yauhtepec and Cuernavaca, and
ciruelas go to Cuernavaca and Mexico City.

[669] Before the Revolution, Tepoztecos' trade relations spread over a wide area
[177] ranging from southern Jojutla, Guerrero, Ozumba in the Federal District, Puebla,
Xochimilco, and Mexico City. Indigo was sold to Puebla, which, in turn, supplied
dried fish. Merchants made frequent trips to Mexico City by foot, and the follow-
ing account from an informant, aged 67, gives some idea of the role of the
merchant and middleman in Tepoztlán before the Revolution.

[438] My father was a farmer, a butcher, and a tradesman. He worked his fields and slaugh-
tered pigs which he sold to the neighboring villages of the municipio, but especially in
San Andrés and Gabriel Mariaca. Later he would go to the southern part of the state of
Morelos to buy up fruit and send it to Mexico City where he would live for a portion of
the year to sell the fruit. He would leave Tepoztlán in April or May. He returned here in
early June to plant and remained here in June, July, August, and September. At the end
of September he returned to Mexico City until November. After All Saints' Day he would
return for the harvest.

[484] My father went to Mexico City on foot, and the trip took all day. We would leave the
village about 6:00 a.m., arrive at Xochimilco at 5:00 or 5:30 p.m. The route was as follows:
first to San Juan, then to a rancho called Oshokiah, in the mountains; from Oshokiah to

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San Pablo Ocuilpan. Here we stopped to have lunch and then continued to San Salvador, then down to San Andrés Aguascal, then to San Lorenzo, then to Xochimilco. By 5:30 P.M., we were generally at the place in Xochimilco when the canoes left. If there were no canoes we walked all night. We generally arrived in Mexico City the following morning and took our fruit to the market.

Some inter-village trade still occurs at the time of fiestas and village *ferias*. However, Tepostecan trading contacts seem to have become limited for the most part to Cuernavaca. Yautepec, at one time the key market for much of Tepostecan produce, has now faded in comparison with the role of Cuernavaca.

The circulation of goods and money in Tepostlán is generally small, but it varies considerably with the seasonal cycles. It is lowest during the months of May, June, July, and August, which is a period of scarcity. The most rapid circulation of goods and the greatest volume of money transactions occur after the plum harvest in September and October, and again after the corn and bean harvest in December and January. Money from plums is generally used to buy new clothing for the family.

Perhaps the most important single occasion for spending during the year is at the Carnival, which comes in February after the harvest. We have estimated that approximately 50,000 pesos are spent by the villagers for the Carnival. It is an occasion for buying new clothes, but the largest expense is for the elaborate costumes of the Chinelo dancers. A costume in 1947 cost as much as 800 pesos, and there were 45 dancers from the three competing barrios. Of course most of the costumes are used from year to year, but there is always the expense of repairing and improving them. Some people rent the costumes. The food expense is also great; musicians from each of the competing barrios are fed by the leading families in the barrio. In addition, most families entertain on this day.

The tourist trade has brought some income to Tepostlán, especially to storekeepers, vendors of soft drinks, and the owners of the two tourist houses, but most of the money spent by these Tepostecans goes to Cuernavaca.

The other important occasions for spending in Tepostlán are the barrio fiestas, the gifts for *compadres* at baptisms, the expenses of the groom in weddings, and the expenses for the wakes and funerals.

There are a few corn merchants in the village who speculate in corn by buying in small quantities throughout the year to sell at higher prices during June to September. Speculation in corn is apparently an old practice in the village, for as early as 1579 we find complaints of Tepostecans against price fixing by local politicians. Some of the corn merchants will make loans on the future corn crop and will be paid back in corn at the time of harvest.

CREDIT, LOANS, AND INTEREST

There are no organized credit facilities in Tepostlán. Although a few hundred Tepostecans have had *cjido* parcels since 1930, no *cjido* credit has come to the village. It is said that an effort had been made at one time to obtain such credit but

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- 452 Tepotecans withdrew the petition because they feared that it would be necessary for the *ejido* authorities to investigate the belongings of each of the families for whom the credit was designed.

426 There are a few money lenders in the village who make loans at an interest rate of ten and twelve per cent a month. The money lenders are extremely cautious about making loans and are careful in choosing a good risk. The leading money lender in the village, a wealthy peasant, explained that he generally requires the borrower to come back about three times on the pretext that there is a shortage of funds. He assumes that any Tepotecan who will put himself in the humiliating position of asking for a loan three times must have real need and appears to be a good risk. Money loans are made by oral or written agreement, but in most cases [675] some property is necessary as security. The practice of pawning property as security for a loan is common. Usually land, oxen, or *ciruela* trees are pawned, but smaller items such as an iron, or even a woman's *rebozo*, may be pawned for small loans from neighbors. During our stay in the village, neighbors often came with small items of property which they offered before asking for a loan.

426 When a man cannot repay a loan, although he may be bound by a written agreement which is filed in the municipio, it is rare that the creditor takes legal action. In fact, not a single case could be remembered. Instead, the borrower must 675 relinquish his pawned property, or get another loan from a second party to repay 691 the first one. All such transactions are viewed essentially as affairs between two individuals or families in which the coercive action of the law is rarely sought.

426 Borrowing money is generally limited to emergency situations when money is needed for food, doctors, medicines, or clothing. Borrowing may also occur to pay for a wedding feast or a funeral. But there is little borrowing for investment in capital goods or for starting a business. Loans are generally for small sums of 100 or 200 pesos. Larger loans are almost prohibitive because of the high rate of interest. While borrowing is not infrequent, it is viewed as an act of desperation rather than as a matter of everyday business. The idea of borrowing money from the bank in Cuernavaca is entirely foreign to the thinking of most Tepotecans.